

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5827
INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4466

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, UR
SUBJECT: AVAILABILITY OF MATZOH IN MOSCOW

REF: MOSCOW 2556

1. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY SEVERAL JEWISH SOURCES THAT THERE IS NO PROBLEM TO GET MATZOHS FOR PASSOVER THIS YEAR IN MOSCOW. OUR SOURCES HAVE INCLUDED "REFUSENIKS" AND NON-REFUSENIKS, MEMBERS OF THE MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE, NON-MEMBERS, AND OBSERVANT AND NON-OBSERVANT JEWS. ALL STATE THAT THERE IS AS MUCH MATZOH ON SALE AT THE MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE AS PEOPLE WANT. NO ONE, TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SOURCES, HAS GONE WITHOUT MATZOH.

2. IN ADDITION TO THE SUPPLIES ON SALE AT THE SYNAGOGUE, OUR SOURCES SAY THAT VISITING WESTERNERS, PARTICULARLY AMERICANS, HAVE BROUGHT IN SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, AMERICAN JEWRY APPARENTLY HAS MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT THIS YEAR, BECAUSE OF THE NEW SOVIET REGULATING BANNING IMPORT OF BREAD PRODUCTS (REFTEL).

3. TWO OF OUR REFUSENIK SOURCES, BOTH UNUSUALLY CYNICAL ABOUT THE MOTIVES OF THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, CONFIDENTIAL

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FIRMLY STATE THAT THE LARGE MATZOH SUPPLIES AVAILABLE AT THE MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE THIS YEAR ARE IN FACT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE NEW LAW. ACCORDING TO THEIR REASONING, THE AUTHORITIES WANT TO BE ABLE TO POINT OUT TO WESTERN CRITICS THAT THE LAW FORBIDDING IMPORT OF BREAD PRODUCTS IS NOT AIMED AT THE JEWS AND THAT IN ANY CASE ENOUGH MATZOH IS AVAILABLE. THESE SOURCES ARE PREPARED TO BET

THAT THERE WILL BE PRACTICALLY NO MATZOH AT ALL NEXT YEAR; AND THAT FOR THE MOST PART, ONLY THE OLD AND DEVOUT SYNAGOGUE MEMBERS WILL BE ABLE TO GET MATZOH THEN.

4. OUR MOSCOW SOURCES HAVE SO FAR HAD NO REPORTS ON MATZOH AVAILABILITY IN CITIES OUTSIDE MOSCOW. HOWEVER, ON A TRIP TO BAKU IN EARLY FEBRUARY, EMBOFFS VISITED LOCAL SYNAGOGUE AND SAW LARGE AMOUNTS OF MATZOH BEING PREPARED. SUPPLIES APPEARED ADEQUATE FOR LOCAL JEWISH POPULATION WHICH, WE WERE TOLD, WAS 5-10,000 PEOPLE. EMBOFFS' WIVES VISITED KIEV SYNAGOGUE IN LATE FEBRUARY AND ALSO SAW LARGE AMOUNTS OF MATZOH BEING PREPARED, IN THIS CASE, THOUGH, NO JUDGMENT COULD BE MADE, AS TO WHETHER SUPPLIES WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND.
TOON

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Message Attributes

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